



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Instruction Memorandum No. **CA-2008-021**
Expires: 09/30/09

To: CA Managers and Supervisors

From: State Director

Subject: Distance Driving and Work Hours Policy

This IM reiterates BLM policy related to driving and required rest periods. Accident statistics for the BLM show that over the past 10 years, more than half of the serious injuries and fatalities within our organization have been caused by driving while fatigued and/or distance driving.

The BLM Manual Handbook, 1112-2, will limit driving time to 10 hours behind the wheel in a 16 hour duty day. This 10-hour period includes rest and meal breaks. The handbook also requires that employees have 8 hours of rest before a duty day that requires driving. Emergency driving for fires is addressed in BLM Manual 9210.05, and driving limitations for heavy equipment operators are covered by Department of Transportation Regulations, 49 CFR 395.

In lieu of driving for more than 10 hours in one duty period for field duty or assignments outside of the local commuting area, employees must plan to do one of the following:

1. remain overnight at the temporary duty location; or
2. ensure there is a relief driver available.

In an emergency situation when it may be critical that an employee exceed the driving limits, supervisory approval to do so must be obtained. Note that the costs associated with one vehicle accident generally exceed the costs associated with an extra day of per diem or the inclusion of a relief driver. Financial considerations should never drive a decision to allow an employee to exceed driving limits if other factors weigh against such a decision.

Finally, no employee is permitted to work more than 16 hours in a 24 hour period including the maximum 10 hour driving restriction. This ensures the required 8 hours rest before driving the next day.

I am committed to ensuring the safety of each individual in this organization. To that end, it is the responsibility of all of us to recognize the potential ramifications of driving while fatigued, overworked or pushing beyond established work periods. As we improve awareness of the problems of fatigue and/or distance driving, I am convinced we will reduce the risk of injury to our employees.

Signed by:
James Wesley Abbott
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management

Attachment: "Wake-Up Call" re Driver Fatigue (1 pg)

OUR “WAKE-UP CALL”

What Contributes to Driver Fatigue?

There may be many outside influences that contribute to sleepy or fatigued driving.

- Long monotonous drives;
- Driving in rural areas with darkness all around;
- lulling vibrations from the road or your vehicle;
- highway hypnosis;
- new vehicles that are designed to be quieter, smoother, and easier to operate; and
- isolation from outside stimulus, etc.

What Are the WARNING SIGNS which Tell Drivers They Are Too Tired to Drive?

- Difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open;
- Eyes beginning to burn;
- Trouble keeping your head up;
- Can't stop yawning;
- Inattention, daydreaming;
- Muscular tension, restlessness, or inability to get comfortable;
- Increase in driving errors; i.e.; tailgating, missing traffic signs, can't remember driving the last several miles.
- Memory loss or inability to recall the location(s) or distances driven.

What Should Drivers Do if They Notice These Symptoms?

To avoid falling asleep at the wheel, you should pull off the road for a break or nap if you experience any of these warning signs. If you are at a roadside rest area, you should exit your vehicle, take a brief walk, and do some simple stretching exercises.

Don't rely on coffee or a caffeine drink to keep you awake. Studies show that the feeling of alertness from caffeine is short-lived, usually as little as 45 minutes.

How to Avoid Driving While Fatigued...

- Get a minimum of 8-hours of sleep the night before driving.
- Don't be afraid to stop along the way and stay overnight.
- Avoid driving straight through to your destination.
- Take a break every 2 hours or 100 miles. Stop sooner if you feel tired.
- When taking a break, get out and stretch, take a short walk. If you're sleepy, take a brief nap for 20 – 30 minutes.
- Don't allow yourself to become too comfortable while driving. Turn off the cruise control, and drive with the window open.
- Whenever long distance or late hours are involved, consider traveling with a relief driver.